



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services
Director of Mental Health

At its meeting held November 3, 2004, the Board took the following action:

65-A

Supervisor Yaroslavsky made the following statement:

“Over the past several years, growing demand on psychiatric emergency rooms and the corresponding need for inpatient psychiatric beds in Department of Health Services’ (DHS) hospitals has become an increasing problem. The growth in the County’s mentally ill population who need hospitalization is due to a number of factors, including the increasing numbers of individuals with mental illness and substance abuse problems and the reduction in the number of long-term inpatient psychiatric facilities across the County and the State. Additionally, State law requires hospitals to accept any patient who is presented in the emergency department by law enforcement as being a danger to themselves or others, thus limiting the ability of DHS to control the flow of patients into the hospital.

“This increased demand is causing stress on the system and raises the risk of patients eloping or harming themselves. In fact, just this week there was an incident involving a patient in a DHS psychiatric emergency room who had been awaiting an inpatient bed for several days.”

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Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, seconded by Supervisor Burke, unanimously carried, the Directors of Health Services and Mental Health were instructed to:

1. Assess the factors leading to the increased demand on the psychiatric emergency rooms and inpatient psychiatric units at the Department of Health Services' hospitals;
2. Develop a plan to immediately address the increased demand; and
3. Report back to the Board within two weeks with joint recommendations to address this problem.

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